

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES \$ 20,000,000 TO WHITE RIVER ELECTRIC TO IMPROVE ELECTRIC SERVICE

Southwest Missouri Congressman Roy Blunt joined Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development, in touring White River Valley Electric Cooperative's facilities. During the visit a Mock Check in the amount of \$20,000,000 was presented to Chris Hamon, General Manager of White River Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc., headquartered in Branson, Missouri. These funds provided an improved distribution system as well as state-of-the-art computer equipment to efficiently serve the approximately 46,000 member-owners and nearly 5,000 miles of power lines in five Missouri counties including Taney, Stone, Christian, Ozark, and Douglas Counties.



"I am very pleased to announce this funding for Southwest Missouri," said Jim Talent, United States Senator, a member of both the Senate Agriculture and Energy Committees. "Missouri needs a strong and reliable electric grid. This loan will help our electric coop continue to provide the low cost power that is essential for creating jobs and sustaining economic growth in this important region of the state."

"Electricity is a basic building block of modern life and economic development," said U.S. Representative Roy Blunt. "Three of the state's fastest growing counties--Christian, Taney and Stone--are served by White River Valley Electric Cooperative. Low-cost electric power is another factor that causes new residents and businesses to locate in the area. The tremendous growth we have seen would not be possible without the support of White River Valley Electric Cooperative and their partnership with the USDA's Rural Development agency."

"With our increased member base, these federal dollars provided the financing needed to expand essential electric service while assisting the development of our rural areas," said Chris Hamon, General Manager of White River Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc. "Equally important, was the improvement to our technological equipment used for meter reading, detecting outages and pinpointing downed lines. This system represents a more cost effective approach to maintaining the nearly 5,000 miles of electric lines for our member-owners."

"I would like to personally thank everyone involved in these projects," said Greg Branum, Missouri State Director for USDA Rural Development. "Financing essential services in support of community development in rural areas is consistent with USDA Rural Development's mission and President Bush's commitment to the future of rural communities."

Branum added, “Special thanks are extended to our federal elected officials including U.S. Senators “Kit” Bond and Jim Talent plus U.S. Representatives Roy Blunt for making available federal monies for funding theses kinds of projects.

“Committed to the future of rural communities.”

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